

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 DODE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2552
SECDEF WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS PRIORITY
CSAF WASHDC PRIORITY
USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY
JCS WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 1841

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, OCON, AWACS, MILI
SUBJ: NATO AEW - UK DECISION TO GO NIMROD

1. THERE FOLLOWS BELOW THE TEXT OF A LETTER DATED 31 MARCH
1977 FROM UK PERMREP KILICK TO SYG LUNS.

2. BEGIN TEXT:
NATO AEW

1. I HAVE BEEN ASKED BY MR MULLEY TO PASS TO YOU THE ENCLOSED
MESSAGE ABOUT THE CONCLUSION HE HAS REACHED, AND AGREED WITH HIS
CABINET COLLEAGUES, FOLLOWING LAST FRIDAY'S SPECIAL
MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE DEFENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE.

2. MR MULLEY WILL BE MAKING A STATEMENT TO THIS EFFECT IN
PARLIAMENT AT 4.00 PM THIS AFTERNOON, AND I AM TO ASK YOU TO
TREAT HIS MESSAGE AS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL THEN.

3. I AM SENDING A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO OUR DPC COLLEAGUES, AND
MAKING COPIES AVAILABLE TO THE FRENCH AND GREEK AMBASSADORS.
CONFIDENTIAL

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MESSAGE FROM THE RT HON F MULLEY, MP, UNITED KINGDOM SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR DEFENCE, TO HIS EXCELLENCY DR J M A H LUNS,
GCMG CH, SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO

1. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE AEW ISSUE BRIEFLY SINCE LAST
FRIDAY'S DPC, BUT I WANTED IN ANY CASE TO WRITE TO YOU
PERSONALLY ON THE OUTCOME OF THE RECONSIDERATION I HAVE GIVEN
TO THE BRITISH POSITION. HAVING LISTENED VERY CAREFULLY INDEED
TO WHAT OUR NATO COLLEAGUES HAD TO SAY AT THE DPC, I HAVE
BEEN FORCED TO CONCLUDE THAT THE NATO AEW PROJECT HAS

CERTAINLY NOT YET BEEN BROUGHT TO THE POINT AT WHICH I SHOULD BE JUSTIFIED IN CANCELLING NIMROD; AND THAT IT WOULD SIMPLY NOT BE REALISTIC TO SUSTAIN THE PROGRAMME ON SOME MINIMUM BASIS FOR THE ADDITIONAL TIME IT WILL ACTUALLY TAKE TO ARRIVE AT THAT POINT. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES MY OWN CONCLUSION IS THAT WE OUGHT NOW TO GO AHEAD WITH NIMROD, AND I HAVE RECOMMENDED ACCORDINGLY TO MY CABINET COLLEAGUES. THEY HAVE AGREED THAT I SHOULD MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON MARCH 31ST.

2. MY STATEMENT WILL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT, IN MY VIEW, THE WAY IS STILL OPEN TO THE REST OF THE ALLIANCE TO ARRIVE AT A COLLECTIVE PURCHASE OF THE REDUCED NUMBER OF AWACS THAT WILL NOW BE REQUIRED, AND YOU CAN COUNT ON MY SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING COLLABORATION TO SECURE THE MAXIMUM MILITARY VALUE FROM THE TOTAL AEW RESOURCES THAT WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO IT. IN THE MEANTIME, THE ALLIANCE NOW KNOWS THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE AN AEW CAPABILITY IN THE UK AIR DEFENCE REGION AND IN THE EASTERN ATLANTIC AND CHANNEL AREAS.

3. FINALLY, COULD I ADD MY OWN WORD OF APPRECIATION FOR THE EFFORTS THAT YOU AND YOUR STAFF, AND IN PARTICULAR WALTER LABERGE AND THE PROJECT OFFICE, HAVE MADE TO PUSH THE WORK ON A NATO FORCE AHEAD AS QUICKLY AS WAS POSSIBLE. I REGRET THAT IN THE EVENT THE TIMETABLES FOR THE TWO PROJECTS HAVE PROVED CONFIDENTIAL

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TO BE INCOMPATIBLE, BUT I BELIEVE THAT ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS REMAIN POSSIBLE AND THAT, IF REACHED, THEY WILL PROVIDE THE ALLIANCE WITH A VALUABLE MILITARY CAPABILITY.
END TEXT.STRAUSZ-HUPE

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